Department of Justice

ANNUAL REPORT

for the fiscal year ending
March 31, 1998

committed to the fair and effective
administration of justice

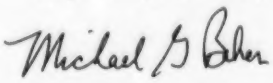
100-04245/

To His Honour
The Honourable J. James Kinley
Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia

Sir:

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report of the Department of Justice for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1998.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Baker, Q. C.
Minister of Justice

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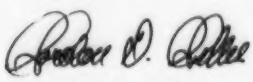

Gordon D. Gillis
Deputy Minister

During this reporting period
Minister Alan E. Mitchell

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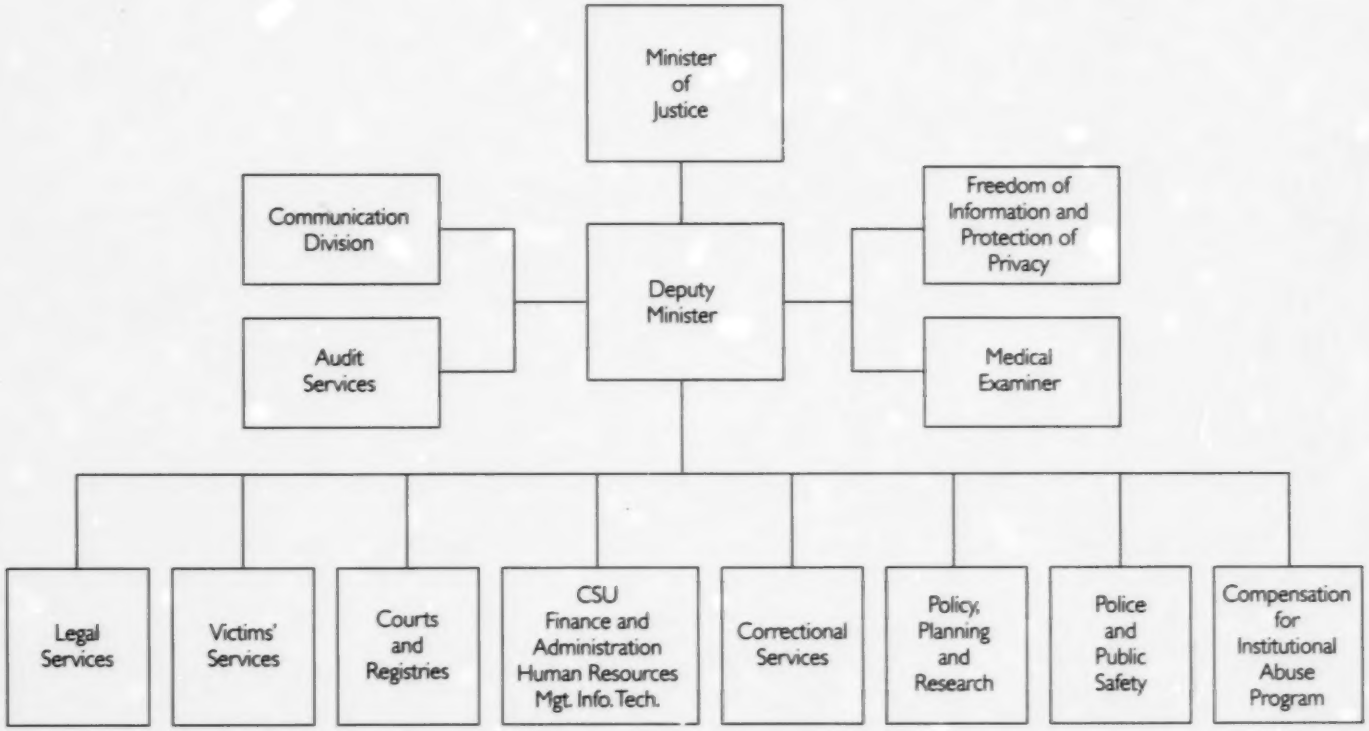
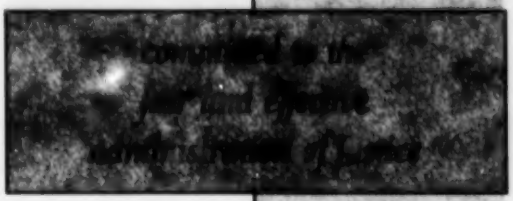
ORGANIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
1997–98



The Department of Justice

The Department of Justice is committed to the fair and effective administration of justice and to excellence in service to the people of Nova Scotia.

Mandate



The Department of Justice is responsible for:

- the administration and operation of correctional facilities for adult and young offenders
- the provision of community corrections services for adult and young offenders
- the provision of legal advice and representation to all government departments and agencies
- all civil proceedings by or against the Crown
- the provision of legal advice and opinions on the development of legislation and regulations
- the form, cataloguing, and publication of regulations
- the promotion of the rights of victims of crime
- the development and implementation of policies and programs for victims of crime
- the provision of administrative support to the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, the Provincial and Family Courts, and Small Claims and Probate Courts
- the administration of the Maintenance Enforcement Program
- the promotion of the preservation of peace and the prevention of crime
- the promotion of the efficiency of policing services and the improvement of police relationships in communities in the province
- the effective and efficient administration of the firearms control program and the licensing of private investigators and guards
- the coordination of the Framework for Action Against Family Violence, through implementation and evaluation

Strategic Goals

- improve public safety and security
- provide effective dispute resolution mechanisms
- offer a coordinated response to victims of crime
- maintain safe and secure custody of offenders
- ensure the lawful administration of public affairs

Guiding Principles

There are several principles which guide the department's daily operations:

Accountability

We are accountable to the citizens of Nova Scotia. We will strive to inform the public of our activities through a policy of openness and accessibility.

Responsiveness

We will be sensitive and responsive to the needs of the public we serve. Our programs and policies will be evaluated on an ongoing basis to measure their validity and effectiveness.

Value for Money

We will ensure that the resources supplied by the taxpayers of Nova Scotia are used to provide the best value in performance and productivity.

Partnerships

Justice is a shared responsibility of governments, communities, and individuals. We believe we can best achieve our mission by entering into partnerships with citizens, organizations, and other jurisdictions.

Commitment to Our Staff

We are committed to providing a working environment that is challenging, rewarding, and physically safe, where individual and team contribution is recognized, where respect for the individual is fostered, and where people can develop professionally and personally.

Excellence

We aspire to excellence in all work and in the quality of our programs.

Leadership

We will cultivate leadership and innovation throughout our organization to prepare for change.

Respect

The work of the department will be carried out in a manner that is respectful of the rights of everyone.

Fairness

Policy and program standards of fairness, honesty, integrity, and quality will be consistently applied.

Rule of Law

In a democratic society, law is the surest expression of the public will. We contribute our skills to making the law, promoting decision making based on law, and ensuring that public affairs are administered in accordance with the law.

Correctional Services Division

Mandate

The Correctional Services Division is responsible for:

- providing services to assist the courts in the remanding and sentencing processes
- administering custody and community-based dispositions of the courts
- providing safe custody, direction, and control for the accused or the convicted offender
- encouraging the offenders' participation (whether in the community or in correctional institutions) in programs to aid in successful reintegration into the community

Our Accomplishments during the Past Year

This division consists of nine adult institutions, three young offender institutions, and 17 field offices. It has an annual operating budget of $37.1 million and almost 700 staff members.

Nova Scotia continues to have the second-lowest incarceration rate in Canada. We have been leaders in community-based alternatives to incarceration and have the second-highest probation rate in the country. We want to continue to build on that impressive record, while putting the safety and security of Nova Scotians first.

We have recognized the need to upgrade the provincial adult correctional institutions, some of which date back more than a century. In the spring of 1997, the department, in partnership with ACG Corrections, completed a proposal known as the Custody Configuration Plan to upgrade correctional institutions across the province. Negotiations with ACG Corrections continued during the summer of 1997 and the results were presented to government in the fall.

In December, the department received approval to proceed with plans to replace the Halifax Correctional Centre with a new institution to be co-located with a forensic psychiatry hospital in the Metro area. In January 1998 the Department of Justice concluded the partnership with ACG Corrections and began working with the Department of Transportation and Public Works to develop a request for proposals for the new facilities. The expression of interest was subsequently issued and responses were to be received prior to April 1, 1998.

Institutional audits were conducted at Halifax, Colchester, Cumberland, Yarmouth, and Lunenburg Correctional Centres. The audits highlighted the need for improvements to the institutions' physical structure. Yarmouth, Colchester, and Cumberland Correctional Centres are more than 50 years old. It is important to note that the diligence and expertise of the staff compensated for the deficiencies in structure. The Lunenburg Correctional Centre was also found to have an outdated and inefficient layout and design, but the audit revealed that staff intervention and attentiveness minimize the potential for disturbances. Although the Halifax Correctional Centre is almost 30 years

old and is in better physical condition than other facilities, its design and layout were not found to meet current needs. Relocation to the new correctional centre and forensic hospital is expected to address many of the issues raised in the audit.

Young Offender Operations

Programs for young offenders continue to be upgraded and improved. In 1994, services and operations between the Nova Scotia Youth Centre at Waterville and the Shelburne Youth Centre were harmonized to ease the re-integration of young people into the community. Programs at both institutions place an emphasis on reasoning and rehabilitation, substance abuse treatment, and life skills training. The entrepreneurship program developed by the Department of Justice in partnership with the Department of Education and Culture, has continued to teach young offenders how to start a business as part of a pre-release program that eases the transition back into the community and provides the life skills they need to become productive members of the community.

We continue to explore ways to combine our resources to deal with youth at risk through the Children and Youth Action Committee (CAYAC). The partners and the departments of Justice, Education and Culture, Health, and Community Services and the Sport and Recreation Commission have continued discussions regarding the development of a therapeutic camp pilot project. The Nova Scotia Youth Centre and the Department of Health completed a review of the mental health needs of youth in custody to determine the program resources and requirements needed to effectively respond to youth mental health issues.

The safety and security of young offenders in our custody is of paramount concern to the department. As part of the extensive changes to our policies and procedures with respect to hiring, training, and education, the Ombudsman continues to serve as the Registry of Complaints for the young offender facilities. The Registry conducts monthly visits to the youth centres and provides support to the youth and staff of the facilities.

Community Corrections

Nova Scotia traditionally has a high participation rate in community-based alternatives to incarceration. Community Corrections has recently been restructured to eliminate regional disparity, provide coordinated program services, and respond to workload increases caused by new sentencing options.

An assessment of the case management process for Community Corrections has been completed. This review involved an extensive literature review, examination of current case management practices in other jurisdictions, and a survey of all Community Corrections staff and major stakeholders across the province. The purpose of the review was to assess the overall approach to case supervision for young offenders and adults on probation. A new case management process will be piloted in the Metro area before the system is implemented across the province in 1999.

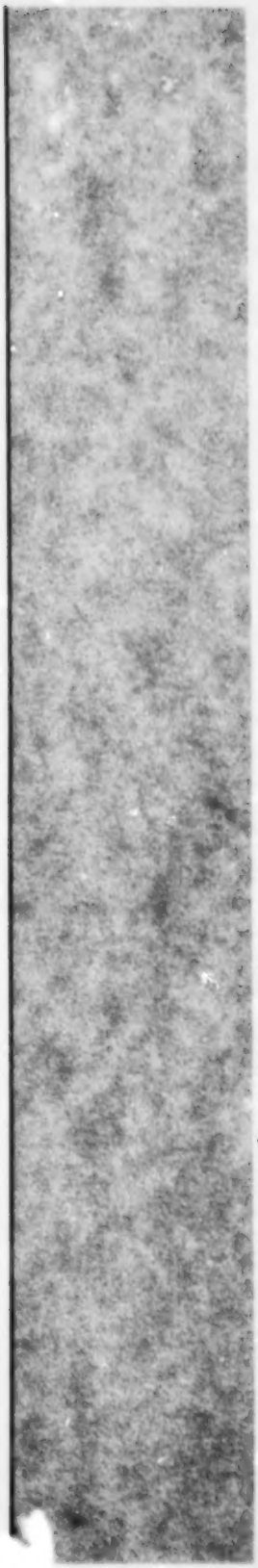
In response to changes in the Criminal Code relating to conditional sentencing, a conditional sentence supervision team has been established in the Metro area. This two-person team provides supervision to approximately 90 offenders under conditional supervision in the Metro area.

Goals for the Next Year

We will continue to address the needs of our physical facilities and will identify a partner to work with the departments of Justice and Health to establish a new, Metro-based correctional centre and forensic hospital.

Reorganization of our head office, a new staff training plan, and a negotiated contract with Local 480, Correctional Officers' Union will all play an important part in improving our ability to provide effective services to Nova Scotians in the next year.

We will continue to work with the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union and the Department of Human Resources to provide employment opportunities for Shelburne Youth Centre staff.



Legal Services Division

Mandate

This division is responsible for:

- providing legal advice and opinions
- representing the Province between all levels of courts and tribunals
- participating in negotiations and agreements
- providing advice and opinions regarding the development of legislation and regulations
- drafting proposed legislation, regulations, Orders in Council, and other statutory instruments
- publication and retention of all regulations

Our Accomplishments during the Past Year

This division provides legal advice and representation to all government departments and agencies. The division's legal expertise encompasses a wide variety of practice, ranging from labour and employment law to consumer, business, and corporate law. Although a high turnover of legal staff in recent years has created challenges, the division has emerged refreshed with a new cadre of staff ready to meet the demands of the next century.

We have examined ways to improve the content and distribution of current regulations to make government more accessible to Nova Scotians. We also understand the importance of Internet accessibility and are working to provide access to Court of Appeal and Supreme Court decisions.

We have developed a plan for managing more effectively the private sector legal services provided to government. We also provide legal training to members of agencies, boards, and commissions.

Our Goals for the Next Year

We will be responding to recommendations of the report by the Law Reform Commission's *Final Report on Juries in Nova Scotia* and will develop a plan to improve enforcement of provincial offences. We will work to publish regulations on CD-ROM to enhance the value of information already on the Internet.

This division is committed to a continued improvement of business processes that includes an intensified training program, high levels of client satisfaction, and improved reporting of key results.

Registry of Regulations

The Registrar and Deputy Registrars, together with the Registry Clerk, have the responsibility of filing and registering regulations and publishing them in the bi-weekly issues of the *Royal Gazette Part II*, as well as indexing and consolidating the regulations.

Other responsibilities of the Registry include approving the form of draft regulations, assisting the legal representatives of the Nova Scotia government departments in the preparation of reprints, and consulting with respect to the revision of regulations.

Each year the Registry responds to over 2000 requests for information and copies of regulations. Print copies of original documents are available and can be certified by the Registrar or a deputy registrar. Copies of the consolidations of individual regulations are available in either printed or electronic form, and preparations are under way to make them available in Folio on CD-ROM and in HTML on the Internet. Listings of regulations by enabling statute and by department, as well as the contents pages and annual indexes to the *Royal Gazette Part II*, have been posted on the Registry website at www.gov.ns.ca/just/regulations.

The Registry also publishes a quarterly sectional index to the *Royal Gazette Part II*, available by subscription and distributed to all provinces in Canada as well as to various subscribers in the United States and the United Kingdom.

In May 1996 the Chief Clerk of the *Royal Gazette Part I* joined the Registry, and the preparation and distribution of the *Royal Gazette Part I* became an additional responsibility of the Registry of Regulations. This publication is the official weekly government record of Cabinet proclamations, Orders in Council, and notices pursuant to provincial statutes.

Courts and Registries Division

Mandate

The Courts and Registries Division is responsible for:

- administration for all courts in Nova Scotia
- management of court offices and registries including probate and bankruptcy
- security and transportation of prisoners to and from court
- coordination of the Justices of the Peace program
- management of the Maintenance Enforcement Program

The courts of Nova Scotia are independent of government. The government, however, is responsible for providing administrative support to the courts and must ensure that they operate efficiently and effectively. The department is committed to a fair and accessible justice system and continues to put in place initiatives that support those objectives. This division operates courts in 45 courthouses and other facilities throughout the province. The court administration is managed through 13 Justice Centres located across the province to ensure that lawyers and the public have access to judicial services.

The Courts and Registries Division also manages the Maintenance Enforcement Program, which is located in eight offices throughout the province.

Our Accomplishments during the Past Year

Restructuring of Division

The division has been consolidating offices over the past few years to improve staff efficiency and effectiveness; to enable cross-training to occur; to provide better customer service through "one-stop shopping" and to control costs. During the 1997–98 fiscal year, new job descriptions were finalized and approval was received for a new staffing structure.

Maintenance Enforcement Program

An evaluation report containing 18 recommendations for improvement to the Maintenance Enforcement Program (MEP) was completed this year. Overall, the results of the program evaluation were positive and clients reported a relatively high level of satisfaction with the program's service. Opportunities for improvement were identified in such areas as client communication and staff training. The recommendations were accepted by the department, and the MEP formed workgroups to plan the implementation.

Child Support Guidelines

Federal Child Support Guidelines were put into effect in May 1997 and Provincial Child Maintenance Guidelines were passed by the Legislature in the fall 1997. The division provided cross-province guidelines training for staff and an education program for the public.

Family Division

Amendments to the Judicature Act enabling the creation of a Family Division of the Supreme Court were passed in the fall 1997. Currently, jurisdiction over family matters is divided between the Family Court (provincially appointed judges) and the Supreme Court (federally appointed judges.) The amendments unified the jurisdictions of the two courts under a Family Division. A proposal to the federal government requesting judicial positions to establish the Family Division in Halifax Regional Municipality and in Cape Breton was accepted in March 1998.

Parent Education

The Parent Education Program developed in the Dartmouth Family Court was expanded to include New Glasgow Family Court in 1997–98. This program continues to educate separating or divorcing parents seeking custody or access about the effect of their behaviour on their children. Parents going through separation and divorce learn how to reduce the anxieties of children experiencing the trauma of family breakups.

Technology

This year KPMG was hired to map the flow of civil and criminal cases through the justice system and to build a business case for improved use of technology. The Courts and Registries Division is responsible for managing and planning all phases of this project.

Parking Ticket Project

In 1997 the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Courts and Registries Division began a joint project to build a streamlined process for enforcing unpaid parking tickets. This project will continue in 1998–99.

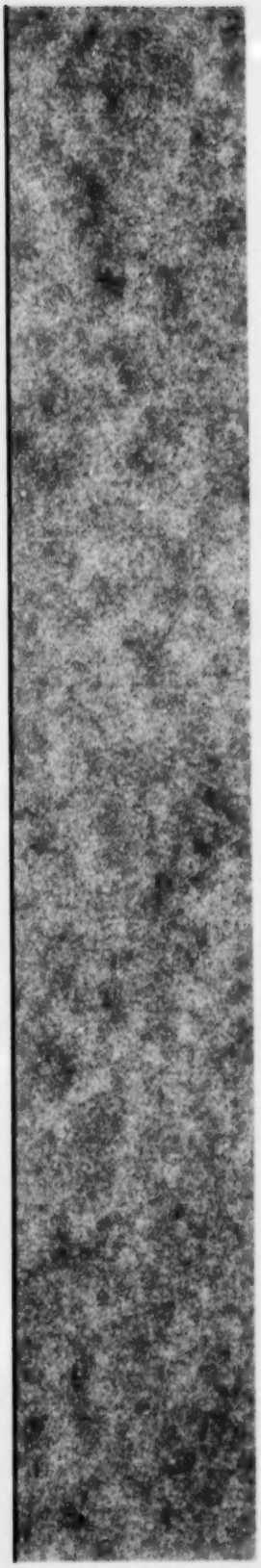
Our Goals for the Next Year

The most complex task facing the division in the next year will be the creation of the Family Division. Two senior staff members will be assigned full-time to lead the Family Division Project. The federal government will appoint and pay judges of the new court and the savings in salaries will be directed toward new and improved services within the family law justice system. These include education programs on post-separation parenting, family mediation services, and counselling. Phase one will begin in the Halifax Regional Municipality and on Cape Breton Island on April 6, 1999.

In the next year, the division will also work on a number of other projects and initiatives, including:

- implementation of a revised civil index data base program and continued review of technology needs
- completion of divisional restructuring, including placement and cross-training of staff in restructured positions
- establishment of regional training committees and a divisional training committee and development of a training plan for the division
- implementation of a revised fee schedule

- development of an interpreter policy and implementation of a project to employ new Canadians in the court system
- development of a mediation policy and guidelines for mediation in support of alternative means of dispute resolution
- implementation of phase one of the project to automate parking tickets
- monitoring the final year of the caseflow management pilot project and development of evaluation tools for assessment of the project in 1999–2000
- review of court premises to determine whether sites are wheelchair accessible and to provide appropriate signs
- response to the evaluation of the Maintenance Enforcement Program and implementation of recommendations
- assessment of GroupWise as a computer program to assist with court scheduling
- development of a sheriffs' training program to address officer safety training needs
- completion of a hazards assessment survey of the sheriffs' workplace and operations
- performance of a facilities security audit for all courthouse facilities in the province.



Victims' Services Division

Mandate

The Victims' Services Division was created in 1989 to reduce the effects of crime on the people of Nova Scotia. Services are provided in four main program areas including: Regional Victims' Services Program, Criminal Injuries Compensation Program, Child/Victim Witness Program, and Victim Impact Statement Program.

The Victims' Services Division is responsible for:

- promoting the rights of victims of crime and providing an avenue to address their needs
- providing information and service that empower victims and raise community awareness of victims' issues
- working within government, the criminal justice system, and the community to develop and implement policies and programs for victims of crime

All programs, with the exception of Criminal Injuries Compensation, are operated through the Regional Victims' Services Offices in Sydney, Dartmouth, Kentville, and New Glasgow. Each office outside the head office in Halifax offers toll-free lines to ensure province-wide accessibility. Regional staff inform victims of their right to compensation and assist them with the application process.

Core Programs

In 1997–98 the division offered the following core province-wide programs:

Regional Victims' Services Program — provides information, advocacy, and support for victims of crime within the criminal justice system.

Child Victim/Witness Program — provides a specialized service to prepare and support child victims or witnesses who testify in criminal court proceedings.

Victim Impact Statement Program — offers victims of crime the opportunity to provide a statement to the court that outlines the financial, physical, and psychological/emotional effects of the crime.

Criminal Injuries Compensation — provides financial compensation to victims of violent crimes committed in Nova Scotia for specific costs related to personal injury.

Our Accomplishments during the Past Year

The division has been working to provide victims with a seamless, integrated service that addresses their needs. We have developed a computerized case management system that will be implemented in the next year. We have continued to support the Framework for Action Against Family Violence and have developed a case tracking and monitoring system for cases involving spousal/intimate partner violence. Regional Victims' Services Offices dealt with 1,644 cases involving spousal/intimate partner violence last year. An additional $292,000 was committed from the Victims' Assistance Fund for the operation of Framework for Action Against Family Violence victim support projects. Criminal Injuries Compensation provided financial awards to 287 applicants.

Giving a Voice to Victims

In addition to support and counselling services, the division provides liaison with the various components of the justice system and assists in preparing for court and writing victim impact statements. Last year, the division provided court preparation services for 1069 clients and submitted 301 victim impact statements from victims to the courts. Our Child Victim Witness Program received 359 referrals.

CHART 1

Court Preparation 1993–98

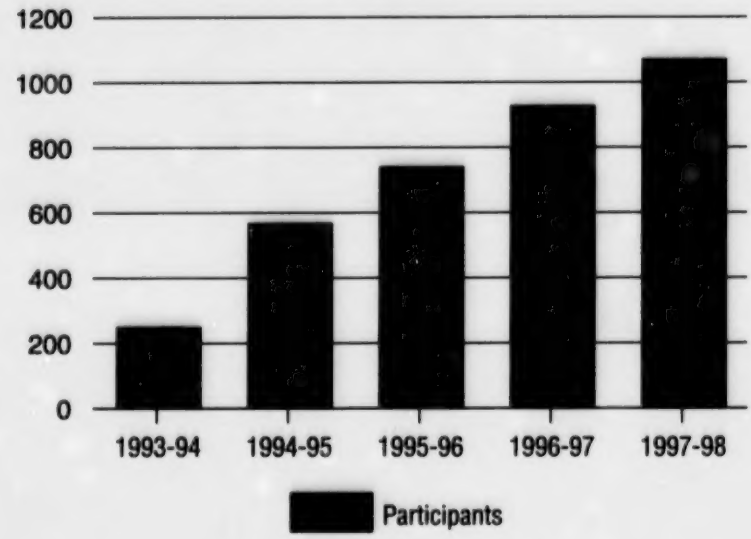
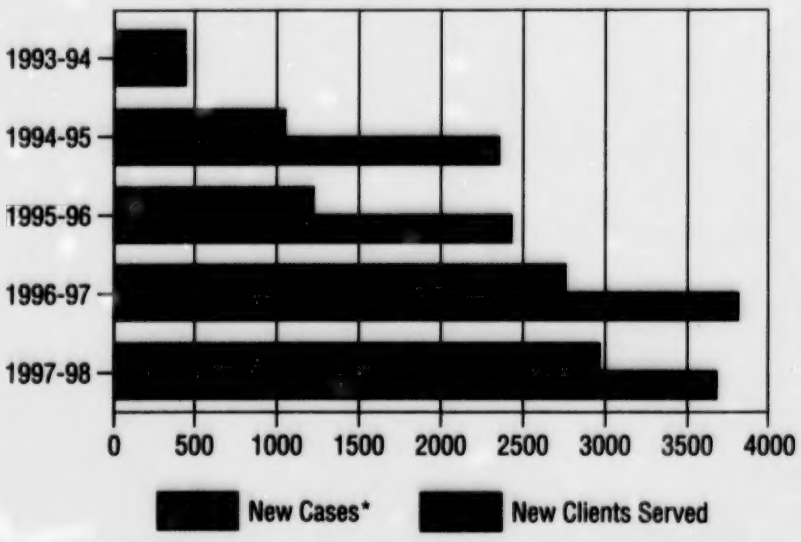


CHART 2

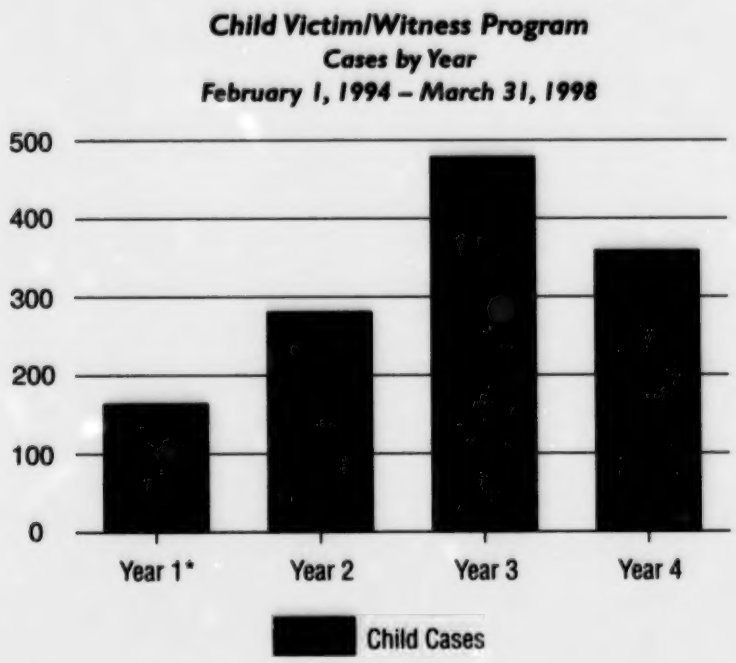
Regional Victims' Services Program



*Case files opened after three contacts or if ongoing service was required.

CHART 3

There was a reduction in the number of child cases in this program. This could be interpreted to mean that there were fewer child victims this past year who were scheduled to testify in criminal proceedings or that there were child victims who were not referred to the service.



* Year 1 includes 14 months.

Our Goals for the Next Year

We will implement a computerized case management and statistical record-keeping program for the Regional Victims' Services Program and will develop joint protocols to improve coordination with other organizations that serve victims.

Efforts to improve access to division services include increasing the presence of Victims' Services staff in court facilities. We will undertake responsibility, in conjunction with the Department of Community Services, for administration and review of the victim support projects under the Framework for Action Against Family Violence.

New initiatives will include researching and developing recommendations for legal representation for complainants in sexual offence proceedings regarding production of their private therapeutic records and creating a pilot project, in partnership with MT&T Mobility and Bryony Transition House, for providing cellular telephones to high-risk victims of stalking or intimate partner abuse for emergency use.

Police and Public Safety Services Division

Mandate

The Police and Public Safety Services Division is responsible for:

- setting policing standards and ensuring that policing services are delivered efficiently and effectively
- providing regular audits, inspections, and reviews of municipal police agencies to ensure that approved policing standards are being met
- coordinating, researching, and providing training for municipal police agencies
- providing routine consultation on police and public safety issues to police agencies, boards, commissions, municipal councils, and other police professionals
- managing contracts for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, First Nations Policing, and the Atlantic Police Academy
- licensing companies and individuals engaged in the private security/private investigation industries
- issuing Firearms Acquisition Certificates and inspecting premises approved to sell firearms under current legislation and proposed changes to the Firearms Act.

Our Accomplishments during the Past Year

We have continued to develop new training initiatives in the area of investigation, community-based policing, and supervisory training. Annual mandatory use-of-force training is provided to all municipal police officers, and newly designed audit and evaluation courses enhance the capabilities of police managers.

Continued consultation on a policing plan for Nova Scotia has been in place since the Minister of Justice first announced it in June 1996. This consultation has included planning sessions with stakeholders such as the Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Association, the RCMP, the Nova Scotia Police Boards Association, and the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities. A discussion paper was developed based on the results of these sessions to promote consultation with a wide range of interested groups and individuals. The final stage of this project, which will compile the responses to the white paper, formulate the province's position, and consult again before implementation, is expected to be completed in 1999.

The Internal Investigation Unit, with a mandate to investigate allegations of abuse in three provincially operated institutions, continues its work. New technology has been introduced to assist in the investigation. This division has established a document section to effectively control approximately 1.4 million government and institutional files.

Our Goals for the Next Year

We will examine the private security industry and establish standards for regulatory guidelines pertaining to qualifications and training.

The Nova Scotia Police Act and regulations must be updated to improve accountability mechanisms and to ensure that the act reflects policing service delivery today and in the future. We will also continue the consultation process leading to the development of a strategic policing plan for the province.

We will develop and implement the administrative infrastructure necessary to meet the requirements of Bill C-68 Firearms Act, to be implemented October 1, 1998. We will explore the feasibility of marketing Nova Scotia justice initiatives on a national and international level.

Policy, Planning and Research Division

Mandate

The Policy, Planning and Research Division coordinates the strategic and business planning process for the department. It is responsible for:

- providing information, policy analysis, and advice to the Minister of Justice, Deputy Minister, and senior management of the department
- promoting effective planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services
- providing information to the public regarding the criminal justice system
- administering the library service for the department
- administering the records management service for the department

Our Accomplishments during the Past Year

Strategic and Operational Planning

The division coordinates the strategic and business planning process and the preparation of the department's submission to *Government by Design*.

Ministerial Support

This division supports the Minister of Justice and Deputy Minister through the preparation of responses to ministerial correspondence; memos to Cabinet to support policy initiatives; and briefing materials for federal/provincial/territorial meetings of ministers and deputy ministers of justice.

Major Initiatives

Restorative Justice

Developed a strategy for implementing restorative justice. The strategy's objective is to build partnerships between the community, justice agencies, and other government departments to find more constructive ways of dealing with crime. The goal of the initiative is to increase offender accountability, victim satisfaction, and community involvement.

Outcome Measures Framework for the Department of Justice

The Department of Justice developed a framework of statistical indicators to provide a means of focusing strategic planning for the different divisions of the department. This was introduced as part of the business planning process and in conjunction with the government-level outcomes initiative.

Volunteer Screening Program

A province-wide screening program was implemented for volunteers in positions of trust with children and other vulnerable populations. Funding was provided by the Department of Justice and other provincial government departments to assist in educating community organizations regarding the screening program.

Evaluation of Maintenance Enforcement Program

A draft evaluation report on the Maintenance Enforcement Program was completed in March 1998. The evaluation obtained input from stakeholder groups and clients (recipients) enrolled in the program. Recommendations were made to improve the administrative practices and quality of service offered by the program.

Framework for Action Against Family Violence

The division coordinated the external evaluation of the victim support service component of the Framework for Action Against Family Violence. Based on the results, renewed funding was given to eight community-based projects to provide crisis intervention and support services for victims of spousal/partner violence.

Summary Offence Court

An evaluation has begun of the Summary Offence Court pilot project in order to determine whether it had achieved the objectives of expediting the processing of summary offence matters and reducing the backlog in the provincial court system.

Caseflow Management Project

An evaluation of the Caseflow Management Project in the Metro-based Supreme Court has begun. The project is designed to improve case processing by decreasing delays in litigation. The evaluation will examine issues of effectiveness, efficiency, cost, and client satisfaction.

Evaluation of Community-based Program for Young Offenders

An evaluation of the Stop and Think Program was in process during 1997–98. The goals of this program were to reduce repeat offences and the administrative costs of dealing with young offenders.

Departmental Program Evaluation Strategy

An evaluation strategy is being developed to effectively coordinate program evaluation activity within the department. The purpose of this initiative is to develop a framework for internal evaluation work, to develop procedures and policies for prioritization of evaluation projects, and to set criteria to determine when external consultants should be used.

Evaluation of Procurement of Legal Services for the Department of Community Services

An evaluation is being conducted of the use of external solicitors by the Department of Community Services. An external consultant has been contracted to develop an

evaluation plan for determining the most cost-effective way to provide legal representation. The division is playing an assisting role in this project in conjunction with the Legal Services Division and the Department of Community Services.

Projected Requirements for Police Personnel

In conjunction with the Police and Public Safety Services Division of the department, the division created a set of projections for retirement patterns among police personnel over the next 10 years. This analysis will help police forces make more effective human resource management decisions.

Summary of Evaluation/ Research Activity

Ad Hoc Requests

There were 56 ad hoc requests for statistical material from staff of the department, other provincial departments, non-governmental organizations, and private citizens.

Research Projects

The division was involved in a number of evaluation and research projects. The division is assisting researchers at Dalhousie University in a project which examines patterns in sentencing and how they are affected by ethnicity. The division also assisted the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics with several research projects. Some of these projects include:

- providing feedback on a set of criminal justice indicators to be used in assessing the functioning of the criminal justice system
- developing a profile of case processing in the civil court system
- conducting a study on recidivism

The division is also assisting the federal Department of Justice in conducting research on conditional sentence orders.

Databases

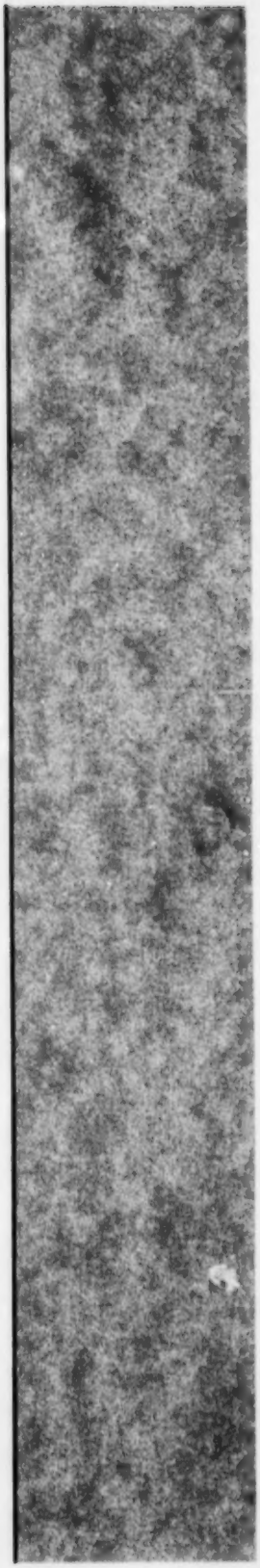
The following databases are maintained by the division:

- admissions to adult correctional institutions and young offender institutions
- court charges (adult provincial courts)
- family violence calls to police and family violence data
- police administration
- adult and young offender community corrections

Interdepartmental, Federal/Provincial/Territorial Committees

The division represents the department on a number of committees:

- Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials Responsible for Justice
- Liaison Officers Committee of the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics
- Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Prostitution
- Family Violence Prevention Initiative



- Restorative Justice Steering Committee
- Outcomes Committee
- Policy Directors Committee
- GeoNova Committee
- Cooperative Community School/Justice Committees
- Children and Youth Action Committee (CAYAC)
- Federal/Provincial/Territorial Group on Restorative Justice

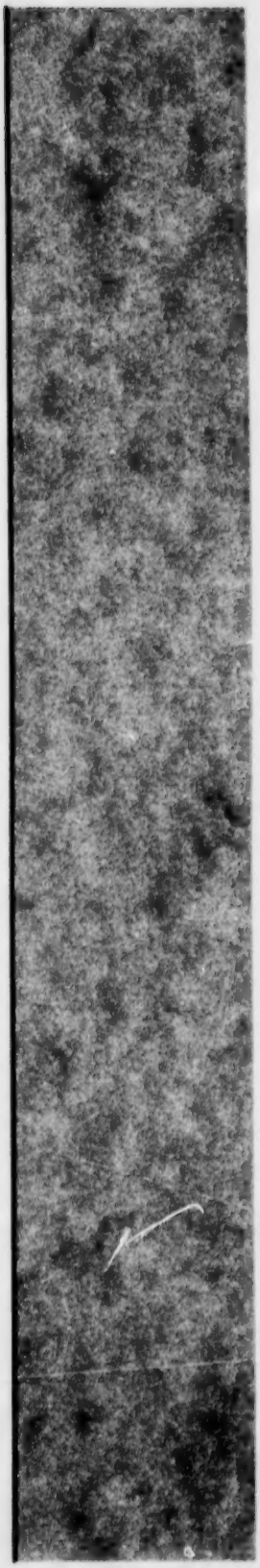
The Library/Records Management

Reporting to the Director of the Policy, Planning and Research Division, the Department of Justice library provides research and information facilities to support the work of its legal staff and staff in outside offices. These services are also provided to the Public Prosecution Service, the Nova Scotia judiciary, law courts registries, and correctional facilities. Extensive research, both manual and electronic, is done on a wide range of legal issues involving Canadian, British, and American caselaw and legislation. The library is staffed by one professional law librarian and a library assistant.

The Department of Justice librarian is also responsible for the central registry. The department's records management program includes implementation and development of STAR/STOR classification and retention schedules, evaluation of automation applications for file management, development of a policy and procedures manual and establishing a province-wide training network for staff who are responsible for the day-to-day creation and maintenance of files.

Summary Profile of Evaluation/Research Projects

Requested by	Description	Status at Year-end (March 1998)
Courts and Registries	Survey of lawyers on Caseflow Management Project in Supreme Court	Completed
Courts and Registries	Analysis of Supreme Court civil files for time of processing	In progress
Courts and Registries	Evaluation of Maintenance Enforcement Program	Draft report completed
Correctional Services	Inmate Forecasting	Updated forecasts completed
Correctional Services	Evaluation of Stop and Think Program	In progress
Legal Services	Client survey	Completed
Police and Public Safety Services	Retirement and human resource requirement projections	In progress
Department-wide	Family violence tracking project	In progress
Department-wide	Sentencing and ethnicity	In progress
Federal Department of Justice	Conditional Sentence Orders Project	In progress
Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics	Adult corrections survey	Ongoing
Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics	Key indicator report	Ongoing
Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics	Civil court project	In progress
Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics	Youth custody and community services survey	Ongoing
Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics	Corrections utilization project:	
	(1) Inmate profile	Completed
	(2) Temporary absence usage	Completed
	(3) Recidivism study	Ongoing



Compensation for Institutional Abuse Program

On November 6, 1997, the Minister released a set of guidelines to govern the administration of the Compensation Program, the assessment of claims, and the file review process.

Under the new guidelines, case management was improved by imposing deadlines for scheduling statement taking, submitting medical releases, filing demands, and appealing the Province's decision through the file review process. Claimants who failed to meet these deadlines were considered to have withdrawn from the program.

There were several major amendments to the program that resulted from the implementation of the guidelines. The first was to eliminate in-person file reviews. In light of the fact that the accused employees were not able to attend these hearings while the accusers were able to attend, this revision is seen as increasing the degree of due process being exercised within the Compensation Program. The second was the admission of polygraph evidence on assessment and at file review, although the guidelines do not prescribe the weight to be placed on this evidence.

Claimants will still have an opportunity to have an independent lawyer review the decision made by compensation staff. The reviewers will consider all written material gathered by the province, the videotape of the claimant's original statement, and any written information deemed relevant by counsel for the claimant.

Under the guidelines, all awards in excess of $10,000 are made in installments. The uses of the long-term counselling award funds have been extended beyond psychological, financial, and employment counselling to include employment upgrading, educational programs, tattoo removal, dental work, or any combination of these.

As of March 31, 1998, 671 of the 1455 claims were settled. Of these, 26 demands were accepted, 519 cases were settled by negotiation, and 126 claims were settled by file review. The average settled award was $32,930 (not including counselling) and the average file review award was $38,637.